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Summary record of the 16th meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Rosenthal ..... (Guatemala)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 122: Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/C.5/55/L.7/Rev.1)

1. **Mr. Ramos** (Portugal), Rapporteur, introducing, on behalf of the chairman, draft resolution A/C.5/55/L.7/Rev.1, which had been drawn up by consensus during informal consultations, said that the word "discussed" in paragraph 6 of the draft resolution should be replaced by the word "requested". He recommended that the Committee should adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

2. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/C.5/55/L.7/Rev.1 as orally revised.

3. *It was so decided.*

4. **Mr. Gaubert** (France), speaking in explanation of position on behalf of the European Union, said that, in the light of new information provided by certain Governments, the European Union had associated itself with the draft resolution, which granted exemptions in excess of those recommended by the Committee on Contributions. However, the European Union remained convinced that the opinion of the experts in the Committee on Contributions was essential to guiding the decisions of the General Assembly. The balance struck in General Assembly resolution 54/237 C regarding the procedure for requests for exemptions must be maintained.

5. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that the application of Article 19 was of particular interest because it affected all Member States in one way or another. Her delegation felt that the two issues of exemptions under Article 19 and the strengthening of Article 19 should be considered separately, but it had joined in the consensus in the interests of flexibility. It would await with interest the information in the report of the Secretary-General requested in paragraph 5 of the draft resolution. The burden of strengthening the application of the United Nations Charter must not fall on certain Member States alone, but must be borne by all, in particular those which were most responsible for the Organization's financial situation.

6. **Mr. Aboud** (Comoros) expressed his delegation's appreciation of the results achieved after several weeks of debate, and its gratitude for the efforts made by the coordinator of the informal consultations and the bureau

7. **Mr. Fox** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of the delegations of Canada and New Zealand, said that, while, the three delegations had joined the consensus on the draft resolution and welcomed its adoption, they regretted that the process leading to its adoption had been so extended and time-consuming. While they advocated granting exemptions only to those countries which figured in the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions, the additional information presented by some applicant States suggested that there was a case for going beyond those recommendations, since the Committee on Contributions itself had not had access to that information.

8. The fact that the Committee had taken steps to strengthen Article 19, including a decision on the "net/net" approach for the calculation of arrears, was an important advance in tightening the application of that Article. Further work was necessary on measures to encourage the timely, full and unconditional payment of assessed contributions and on ways to improve the consideration by both the Committee on Contributions and the Fifth Committee of requests for exemptions.

9. **Mr. Chandra** (India) expressed satisfaction with the result of the consultations, which would enable all the countries involved to maintain their voting powers. His delegation valued highly the advice of the Committee on Contributions with regard to the application of Article 19, but also recognized the pre-eminent role of the General Assembly in taking the final decision. The Fifth Committee should continue, with due sympathy and consideration, to examine all requests for exemptions under Article 19.

10. **Mr. Alatrash** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) expressed his delegation's appreciation of the exhaustive efforts made to arrive at a consensus and commended the flexibility shown by certain delegations, in particular those of the European Union and Brazil. It would be important in future for the Committee on Contributions to substantiate its recommendations objectively so as to facilitate discussion by the members of the Fifth Committee of possible exemptions under Article 19. It was crucial for all Member States to pay their contributions in full to allow the United Nations to overcome the financial

difficulties it currently faced. It should be recalled that exemptions allowed under Article 19 were only of an ad hoc nature.

11. **Mr. Fujii** (Japan) said that his delegation had joined in the consensus because of the balance struck in the draft resolution. However, it wished to express the hope that recommendations made by the Committee on Contributions would be respected to the maximum extent possible. The experts who sat on that Committee were worthy of the Fifth Committee's trust.

12. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the draft resolution just adopted once again confirmed the authority of the General Assembly to grant exemptions under Article 19. His delegation felt that the linkage between the strengthening of Article 19 and the granting of exemptions was unsuitable. It would have been preferable to deal with the two topics in separate resolutions.

13. **Mr. Hartog** (Brazil) said that his delegation shared the concern of other delegations concerning the linkage between the granting of exemptions and the strengthening of Article 19, both of which were subjects that must always be considered on their own merits. His delegation would await with interest the information to be submitted by the Secretary-General and the Committee on Contributions concerning the strengthening of Article 19. It hoped that in future the Fifth Committee would concentrate on the strengthening of the financial situation of the Organization rather than the granting of exemptions.

14. **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico) said that his delegation had always strongly supported the strengthening of Article 19, which was the only part of the Charter which prompted Member States to shoulder their share of the Organization's financial burden. The two subjects, namely of the granting of exemptions and the strengthening of Article 19, must be considered separately so as to avoid the type of impassioned debate that the draft resolution had generated. Article 19 did in fact help to ensure that States paid what they owed. Decisions must be made on a well-informed basis, but action must also be taken to ensure that the granting of exemptions did not weaken the Organization. Perhaps it was time to consider alternative mechanisms to ensure that recourse to exemptions should not be excessive and that payment of contributions should be prompt.

15. **Ms. Aragon** (Philippines) said that her delegation had at the outset expressed its full support for the requests for exemption made by the States mentioned in the draft resolution. It would await with keen interest the report of the Secretary-General and the recommendation of the Committee on Contributions.

16. **The Chairman** noted that the flexibility shown by the delegations reflected a very great sense of responsibility. He trusted that the Committee would be able to continue its work in that spirit during the rest of the session.

Other matters

17. **The Chairman** said that he had received a communication from the President of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) requesting access to address the Committee at the current session. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/213, and in keeping with the practice of the Committee at previous sessions of the General Assembly, he took it that the Committee wished to invite the representative of FICSA to make an oral statement in connection with agenda items 123 and 124.

18. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.